

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 12, 16, and 17 are now pending in the application. Applicant added new claims 16 and 17. No new matter is added. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

OBJECTION/DUPLICATE PATENTING

The Office Action states that Claims 1-3 stand rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1-5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,703,877. Applicant includes herewith a terminal disclaimer.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobayashi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,703,877). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant notes that Kobayashi has a U.S. filing date of November 1, 2002. The present application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application 2002-279284, filed September 25, 2002, which antedates the Kobayashi reference. Applicant submits herewith an English translation of the priority document, thereby perfecting priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119. As such, Kobayashi is disqualified as a prior art reference.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that Claims 4-7 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowable subject matter. Applicant elects to defer amending the claims into independent form until after the above remarks are considered.

NEW CLAIMS

Applicant added new claims 16 and 17. Claims 16 and 17 incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 4 and 5, respectively. Applicant respectfully submit that claims 16 and 17 should be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

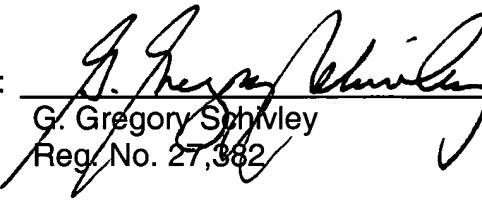
It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner

believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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